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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/692,657	10/24/2003	Akira Muroi	Swan Case 800	9932
23474	7590	11/24/2004	EXAMINER	
FLYNN THIEL BOUTELL & TANIS, P.C. 2026 RAMBLING ROAD KALAMAZOO, MI 49008-1699			HEWITT, JAMES M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3679	

DATE MAILED: 11/24/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/692,657

Applicant(s)

MUROI ET AL. 

Examiner

James M Hewitt

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 October 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 24 October 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION***Priority***

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Drawings

Figures 5 and 6 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). Corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.121(d)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Note that the brief description of figures 5 and 6 (see 'BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS) should be amended to indicate that figures 5 and 6 are prior art.

Specification

Applicant is reminded of the proper language for an abstract of the disclosure.

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The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-7 are objected to because of the following informalities:

In claim 1 line 7, "these" should be replaced with "each of said".

In claim 4 line 1, "said through hole" should be replaced with "each of said through holes".

In claim 4 line 2, the second instance of "the" should be replaced with "each".

In claim 4 line 3, "respective" should be inserted before "shoulder".

In claim 4 line 4, "corresponding" should be inserted before "nut".

In claim 6 line 2, "the outer side" of what?

In claim 6 line 2, "the inner circumference" of what?

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 3-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 3, the phrase "and the like" renders the claim(s) indefinite because the claim(s) include(s) elements not actually disclosed (those

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encompassed by "and the like"), thereby rendering the scope of the claim(s) unascertainable. See MPEP § 2173.05(d).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 3, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fritz (US 1,948,211).

With respect to claim 1, Fritz discloses a pipe joint comprising a hollow cylindrical joint body (15, 16) made of elastic material with a prescribed length, wherein a circular flange (14) is embedded into each of the both ends of the joint body, a plurality of through holes are provided communicating axially at prescribed intervals in the direction of circumference of said flanges and the joint body, and said both flanges are connected to the joint body with a connecting appliance penetrated into these through holes.

With respect to claim 3, wherein said connecting appliance comprises a through bolt and a nut.

With respect to claim 5, wherein on the surface of the outer side of said both flanges, a plurality of screw holes (two of the holes for bolts 17) for

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connecting piping (10) with an outward opening is provided in the direction of the circumference at prescribed intervals.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2, and 6-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fritz (US 1,948,211).

With respect to claim 2, Fritz's joint body is made of rubber. It is unclear whether this rubber is heat-resistant having rigidity with several millimeters of displacement absorbency against eccentricity, expansion and contraction. Nevertheless, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ such a heat-resistant rubber, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

With respect to claim 6, the Examiner takes official notice of a convex seal. And it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify Fritz such that the outer surface of the joint body (as at 16) to include rounded projections or bumps as an alternative means for sealing against linings (13).

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With respect to claim 7, Fritz fails to teach the claimed reinforcement member. The Examiner takes official notice of such a member, and it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ such a member within body portion (15) in order to impart added strength and stability to the joint body.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 4 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Also note that the allowability of claim 4 is contingent upon overcoming the above noted claim objections to claims 1 and 4, See ***Claim Objections*** above.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

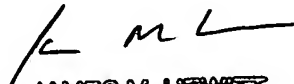
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James M Hewitt whose telephone number is 703-305-0552. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 930am-600pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel Stodola can be reached on 703-308-2686. The

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fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


JAMES M. HEWITT
PRIMARY EXAMINER